problem of cooperative sugar mills and the default in Management of the mills. The Committee submitted report in March, 1999. The Govern of Maharashtra has not taken any decision on its report so far.

World Bank Report Regarding PDS

2831. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the World Bank report on the working of anti-poverty programmes in India which shows that to reach one rupee by way of benefit to the poor, Government have to spend Rs. 7 on the Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, What is Government's reaction in regard thereto; and

(c) how much financial aid Government had received from the World Bank for anti-poverty programmes during the last five years, alongwith the total expenditure incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) It has been reported in World Bank Discussion Paper No. 380 brought out in 1997 on India's Public Distribution System (PDS) that the cost per Re. 1 of income transfer to the poor was exorbitant particularly for the Andhra Pradesh rice subsidy scheme. The high cost of income transfer was due to weak targeting. The welfare gains to the poor can be enhanced by fine targeting.

(b) The proposal to exclude the affluent section of the society from access to PDS was discussed in the Conference of Chief Ministers' held on Basic Minimum Services (BMS) held during 4-5 July, 1996. The Conference, however felt that as a large section of the population who may be above the poverty line (APL) are also at present getting the benefit of the PDS, suitable measures should be taken to ensure availability of essential commodities at reasonable prices to this section. The general consensus in the Conference of Chief Ministers held on 30.9.1997 to review implementation of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was that there, should be no reduction in the allocation to APL families. It has not been possible to exclude the non-poor from PDS because of the lack of consensus on this issue.

(c) As far as the PDS and anti-poverty schemes like the wage employment programmes are concerned, no assistance has been received from the World Bank during the past five years.

Back-dated Relaxation in Quality of Rice for Procurement

2832. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Goverment have received any representation from the Punjab Government on behalf of the rice millers seeking back dated relaxation in the quality of rice for procurement by Government agencies; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what action Government have taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) Representation was received from the Government of Punjab seeking relaxations in the specifications of rice from the beginning of the Kharif Marketing Season 1998-99 on the ground that the paddy procured by-the agencies had been affected due-to-unseasonal

rains. On consideration of the request and in order to ensure milling of paddy, the Government has relaxed the specification of rice in respect of paddy procured in Punjab during the current kharif marketing season.

Implementation of Weights and Measures Act in Packed Milk Industry

2833. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal to amend the Prevention of Food Adultration Act to bring microbial contamination of packed milk at the consumer level is under consideration of Government;

(b) whether Government are insisting that the microbial standards set under BIS standard currently at the plant level be extended to consumer level; and

(c) if so, whether the Weights and Measures Act, 1975 would be strictly implemented in the packed milk industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) No such proposal to amend the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) is presently under consideration of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

(b) Under PFA Rules, 1955, there is no such requirement or conditions for sale in respect of "milk/packed milk".

(c) The provisions of the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976 and the Standard of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977 are enforced strictly by the State/UTs. Whenever any violation is detected during inspection, cases are initiated by the States/UTs against the offenders under the aforesaid Act/Rules.

Closure of Sugar Mills

2834. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that due to heavy import of sugar from Pakistan and Brazil, with low rate of duty, many sugar mills in country have become sick or are closed; if so, the details for every individual closed sugar mills, State-wise; and

(b) what prevents Government to increase import duty to save the sugar industry, sugar farmers and workers in millions, all over the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) As per Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence And Statistics (DGCIS), Calcutta, a quantity of 63,6306.0 tonnes has been imported during the financial year 1998-99 (up to December, 1998). Out of this, a quantity of 441619.0 tonnes has been imported from Pakistan which constitutes about 69.40% of the total import. Further, a quantity of 44206.0 tonnes has been imported from Brazil which is about 6.95% of the total import during the above period.

Closure/sickness of sugar mills in the country could be due to variety of factors, such as inadequate cane availability, uneconomical size, old age and bad condition of plant and machinery, technical and managerial incompetence, excessively high cane price not commensurate with sales realisation and various other factors. This Ministry has no information about sickness/closure of any sugar mill on account of heavy import of sugar.

(b) The import of sugar was allowed under Open General Licence (OGL) in March, 1994 with zero custom duty. The Government has increased the custom duty on imported sugar thrice in the